

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND UTILIZATION
Incentive Awards Program
Time Off as an Incentive Award

APPROVAL/TRANSMITTAL

This updates the manual section providing OIG policy and procedures for granting employees time off with pay for periods up to 40 hours, to encourage and reward contributions to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations. This revision also gives authority to SAC's, DD's, and RIG's to grant time off awards of up to 3 days. This supersedes IG-3452, dated June 7, 1993. Remove and destroy previous editions.

ROGER C. VIADERO

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A. BACKGROUND. Agencies are authorized to grant employees time off from duty as an incentive award as part of the Incentive Awards System, under the authority and requirements of 5 U.S.C. 4502(e), 5 CFR 451, and Department Personnel Manual Chapter 451.

B. DEFINITION. Time off award is an excused absence granted to an employee without charge to leave or loss of pay, as an incentive award.

C. POLICY. Time off awards are intended to promote employee productivity and creativity by rewarding contributions to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations. All OIG employees, except members of the Senior Executive Service, are eligible for time off awards. Due weight must be given to time off awards when rating and ranking an employee for promotion as provided in 5 U.S.C. 3362.

D. CRITERIA. The following are examples of employee achievements for which time off might be an appropriate form of recognition:

1. Making a high quality contribution involving a difficult or important project or assignment;

(D2)

2. displaying special initiative and skill in completing an assignment or project before the deadline;
3. using initiative and creativity in making improvements to a product, activity, program, or service; and/or
4. ensuring that the mission of the unit is accomplished during a difficult period by successfully completing additional work or a project assignment while maintaining the employee's own workload.

E. LIMITATIONS

1. A full-time employee may be awarded up to a total of 80 hours of time off during a leave year. A part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty may be granted time off during the leave year up to the average number of hours of work in the employee's biweekly scheduled tour of duty.
2. The maximum amount of time off for a single contribution is one-half (40 hours) the maximum that may be granted during the leave year, as described in section E1 above.
3. A time off award must be scheduled and used within 1 year after the effective date of the award. The award is effective the first pay period following approval. After the 1-year limit, any unused time off will be forfeited.
4. Supervisory approval must be obtained for the specific date(s) the employee would like to use the time off.
5. A time off award will not convert to a cash payment under any circumstances.

F. DETERMINATION OF AMOUNT OF TIME OFF. The amount of time off should be comparable to the employee's contribution, effort, or tangible or intangible results. To determine the number of hours for a single contribution, use the following guidance from the USDA Guide for Employee Recognition.

The following chart covers most situations:

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Value of the Employee's
Contribution

Hours to be Awarded

Small/Moderate

1-10 hours

Contributions that helped to ease a backlog or completing a special project that benefited primarily the employee's home office.

Moderate/Substantial

11-40 hours

Contributions that helped an entire division, region, or other large geographic area.

G. DOCUMENTATION

1. Form AD-287-2 (7/94) - Recommendation and Approval of Awards. Revised Form AD-287-2 (7/94) must be used to recommend and approve time off awards. (See sample in exhibit A).

2. Justification. All time off awards in excess of 1 workday must be supported by a written justification which briefly describes the accomplishments which are the basis for the award.

3. Letter of Congratulations. A brief congratulatory letter which cites the reason for the award, the amount of time off granted, and the effective date should be signed by the appropriate management official and presented to the recipient. (See sample in exhibit B.) Certificates will not be prepared for time off awards.

4. Group Awards. A time off award may be granted to a group of employees, with the total number of hours based on the benefits to the organization provided by the group's accomplishments. A Form AD-287-2 must be prepared for each member of the group. If the number of hours granted to individual group members differs, a brief explanation must accompany the documentation forwarded to HRMD.

H. APPROVAL AUTHORITY. The following signatures must be obtained before the time off award may be processed.

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1. Time off awards of 3 workdays or less. These awards may be based on the recommendation of a supervisor or may be made directly by the approving official.

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Approving Official</u>
Field employee	RIG or SAC
Headquarters employee	AIG, DD, or SAC
RIG, SAC, or DD	AIG
IG immediate staff	IG, Deputy IG

2. Time off awards in excess of 3 workdays. These awards must have the recommendation of a supervisor or higher level official and the approval of the IG or an AIG. Review by an intermediate official is optional.

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Approving Official</u>
Any OIG employee (except SES)	IG, Deputy IG, or AIG

Approving officials should make note that even though they may approve a time off award, the recipient cannot be granted the actual time off until notification is received that HRMD has processed the award and an effective date has been established.

I. PROCEDURES

1. Approving Official

a. Review recommendations for time off awards and indicate approval by signing form AD-287-2.

b. Transmit the original and all copies of form AD-287-2 to HRMD with a copy of the written justification if required.

c. Upon return of original form AD-287-2 from HRMD present recipient with a brief congratulatory letter and a copy of the written justification (if the award is more than one workday), and forward the original form AD-287-2 to the recipient's timekeeper.

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2. HRMD

- a. Review form AD-287-2 and supporting documentation for time off awards to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.
- b. Enter the effective date in block 27 of form AD-287-2. Enter information from the form AD-287-2 into the NFC personnel system to produce an SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action.
- c. File copy 1 of the SF-50 in the recipient's Official Personnel Folder.
- d. Forward the original form AD-287-2 to the approving/recommending official, as notification that award has been processed and of the effective date.
- e. Retain copies 2, 3, and 4 of the form AD-287-2 in the incentive awards program files.
- f. Furnish reports on time off awards when requested by the Office of Personnel Management.

3. Supervisor

- a. When evaluating employee performance, consider whether or not the employee meets the criteria for a time off award (see section D). If so, initiate form AD-287-2 and any necessary supporting documentation.
- b. When a subordinate employee receives a time off award, monitor the 1-year time limit in order to prevent the recipient's forfeiture of the award.
- c. Review and approve, if appropriate, subordinate's request on SF-71, Application for Leave, to use time off granted as an award, ensuring that the time off requested is covered by an approved award and is within the specified 1-year time limit.
- d. Upon request of an employee who experiences physical incapacitation for duty during a period of time off granted as an award, grant sick leave for the period of incapacitation.

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4. Award Recipient

a. Complete SF-71 (checking "other" block, specifying "time off award") and obtain supervisory approval for the date(s) he/she wishes to use the time off award (within 1 year of the effective date). NOTE: A time off award is not effective (i.e., available for use) until the first day of the pay period after which it was approved.

b. Monitor the 1-year time limit in order to avoid forfeiture of the award.

5. Timekeeper

a. File the original copy of the form AD-287-2 with the recipient's Time and Attendance record.

b. Maintain a manual account of the time off award hours granted and used. As award hours are used, enter the balance in the "Remarks" section of the recipient's current Time and Attendance Report. (Example: time off balance = 40 hours.)

c. Enter code 61 in the prefix field, 66 in the transaction code field and the number of time off hours used in the 1st week/2nd week hours/fraction field(s) on the T&A.

REMINDER: Time off is an incentive award and is not considered "leave."

d. Ensure that the recipient's Time and Attendance records contain supporting documentation and that the recipient's time off and leave balances are correctly maintained.

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Recommendation & Approval of Awards

AD-287-2 (7/94)

SAMPLE CONGRATULATORY LETTER

October XX, 2000

Linda R. Jones
Secretary
Northeast Region

Dear Linda:

I am pleased to inform you that the Assistant Inspector General for Audit has approved my recommendation that you be granted a time off award of 16 hours for your invaluable assistance in typing, proofreading, and finalizing the XYZ report during the period from July 23 through August 28, 2000. Your contributions were instrumental in enabling this region to meet the deadline established by headquarters with time to spare. Several of the managers who worked on this special project commended the quality of your work as well as your ability to cope with innumerable last-minute revisions. In addition, I was impressed with your ability to successfully manage your own workload during this critical period.

Your 16 hours of time off will be available for your use anytime between October 14, 2000, and October 13, 2001. When you decide to take your time off, just schedule it with your supervisor by submitting an SF-71.

Congratulations!

Sincerely,

Regional Inspector General
for Audit